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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 17 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request that you have the present letter and the annexed document entitled "Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region towards the Year 2000 and Beyond", adopted by the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, held at Manila from 7 to 11 October 1991, circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 77 and 94.

(Signed) Sedfrey A. ORDOÑEZ
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

MANILA DECLARATION ON A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE ESCAP REGION TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

We, the Governments of the ESCAP region, at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, Manila, the Republic of the Philippines, 7 to 11 October 1991,

Bearing in mind the fundamental social objectives of development, as contained in international declarations and strategies, and referring to the importance and continuing relevance to the ESCAP region of various other international instruments concerning specific social groups in social development issues, subject to ratification by member countries, as applicable,

Recalling various important instruments in the field of social development and in related areas adopted by ESCAP, particularly:

- The Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development, adopted by the Commission in resolution 274 (XLIV) of 20 April 1988,

- The Tokyo Declaration on Enhanced Regional Cooperation for Drug Abuse Control in Asia and the Pacific, endorsed by the Commission on 10 April 1991,

- The Guidelines for Action in Support of Education for All in the ESCAP Region, adopted by the Commission on 10 April 1991, and

- The Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by the Ministerial-Level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific on 16 October 1990,

Recalling ESCAP resolution 45/1 of 5 April 1989 on a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond, in which the Commission decided to convene the present Ministerial Conference and to consider and adopt at that Conference, a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond, incorporating the themes of distributive justice, poverty eradication and

popular participation.

Optimistic that the coming century will see the Asia-Pacific region taking a leadership role in the global economic and social arena.

Welcoming the improved international political climate, which had opened new opportunities for reduced military expenditure and increased opportunities for enhanced social development.

Noting with concern that, despite the favourable economic growth trends recorded in a number of developing ESCAP countries and territories over the past several decades, the long-term social objectives - the eradication of absolute poverty, the enhancement of popular participation and the realization of distributive justice - have for the most part yet to be achieved in the ESCAP region.

Reiterating that the primary responsibility for the development of the developing countries of the region rests with those countries themselves.

We, the Governments of the ESCAP region,

1. Reaffirm that the many social problems afflicting the region are closely interrelated, and that this situation requires a comprehensive, integrated and sustained policy, planning and programming response to provide for an improved quality of life for all the people,

2. Recommit ourselves to the promotion of regional cooperation for social development, and to the proposition that the eradication of poverty, achievement of distributive justice and attainment of popular participation constitute the fundamental objectives of social development in the ESCAP region to the year 2000 and beyond,

3. Reaffirm that a number of pressing social issues intimately associated with the imbalance between economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region require urgent, forceful and coordinated action by the members and associated members of ESCAP,

4. Urge all members and associate members of ESCAP, in pursuit of the fundamental objectives of social development in the region, to take early and effective action:

- To ensure that social development concerns receive appropriate consideration at the highest levels of government through their full integration into overall development policy, planning and programming and regular review by all concerned agencies and organizations,

- To promote involvement by government agencies, of non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other concerned entities in the formulation and implementation of social development policies and programmes through such means as the establishment of inter-sectoral committees and provision of policy support and resources,

- To target the delivery of social services and broaden their coverage, focussing on social groups with special needs,

- To increase the professional capabilities of personnel responsible for the planning, programming and delivery of social services through the improvement of skills training,

- To support and encourage research on social development concerns, innovative approaches to development and mobilize resources for these purposes,

- To strengthen procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and revision of policies and programmes that have an impact on social progress at the national and local levels,

- To ensure that sufficient resources are made available, through adequate budgetary allocations and the restructuring of public expenditures, to deal with critical social development concerns throughout the region,

5. **Hereby adopt** the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond, which has the basic objectives of the eradication of absolute poverty, the realization of distributive justice and the enhancement of popular participation, as contained in the supporting document annexed to this Declaration, keeping in mind national policies and circumstances,

6. **Decide** that this Declaration shall be called the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond,

7. **Express** appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme for having provided financial and substantive support to the preparatory activities leading to the formulation of the Strategy,

8. **Invite** all concerned donor countries and funding agencies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations to provide technical and financial support to the implementation of the priority areas identified in the Strategy,

9. **Request** the Executive Secretary to accord highest priority to the mobilization of sufficient regional support for the implementation of the Strategy by all ESCAP members and associate members, and to report regularly to the Commission on the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy.

. . . . . .

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE ESCAP REGION TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

PREAMBLE

The Governments of the ESCAP region, at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, Manila, the Republic of the Philippines, 7 to 11 October 1991,

Bearing in mind the fundamental social objectives of development, as contained in the following instruments:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 217(III) of 10 December 1948,

- The Declaration on the Right to Development, proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986,

- The Declaration on Social Progress and Development, proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 2542(XXIV) of 11 December 1969,

- The Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 42/125 of 7 December 1987,

- The Strategies for the First, Second, Third and Fourth United Nations Development Decades, proclaimed in General Assembly resolutions 1710(XVI) of 19 December 1961, 2626(XXVI) of 24 October 1970, 35/56 of 5 December 1980 and 45/199 of 21 December 1990, and

- The Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 45/206 of 21 December 1990,

Referring to the importance and continuing relevance to the ESCAP region of various other international instruments concerning specific social groups and social development issues, particularly:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1979 under resolution 34/180,

- The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted on 26 July 1985 by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace,

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989 under resolution 44/25,

- The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, adopted on 30 September 1990 by the World Summit for Children,

- The Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth, endorsed by the General Assembly on 18 November 1985 under resolution 40/14,

- The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 1982 under resolution 37/52,

- The Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, adopted on 6 August 1982 by the World Assembly on Ageing,

- The Alma-Ata Declaration, adopted by the International Conference on Primary Health Care on 12 September 1978, and the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000, adopted by the World Health

Assembly on 22 May 1981,

- The World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, adopted by the World Conference on Education for All on 9 March 1990,

- The Milan Plan of Action adopted on 6 September 1985 by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and approved by the General Assembly on 29 November 1985 under resolution 40/32,

- The Beijing Rules: The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, adopted by the General Assembly under resolution 40/33 of 29 November 1985,

- The Declaration and Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, adopted on 26 June 1987 by the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking,

- The Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the General Assembly on 11 December 1987 under resolution 42/186, and

- The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1988 under resolution 43/181,

Have adopted the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond.

I. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The social development strategy for the ESCAP region towards the year 2000 and beyond responds to a call by the Governments of Asia and the Pacific for new approaches to development policy and planning — approaches that address social development directly and comprehensively as an integral aspect of the overall development process.

2. The strategy has the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of all the people of the ESCAP region in keeping with their individual and collective hopes and aspirations, within the context of their prevailing cultural traditions and practices.

3. With that aim in mind, the basic objectives of the strategy are: the eradication of absolute poverty, the realization of distributive justice and the enhancement of popular participation.

4. Within the framework of the foregoing aims and objectives, the strategy assigns priority to the advancement of social development in the region's developing countries, particularly least developed, land-locked and small island developing countries. Priority is also assigned to the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, including women, children, youth, disabled persons and the elderly.

A. Eradication of absolute poverty

5. Those individuals, families, communities and other social groups at the lowest levels of well-being in a society are ordinarily identified as the poor. Poverty in that general sense can be identified as a relative condition occurring in all societies. The level of well-being of the least advantaged groups in society may be so low, however, as to be marked by deprivation of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and essential services such as clean water, sanitation, health care and education. Such conditions of deprivation are referred to as absolute poverty. The eradication of absolute poverty in the ESCAP region is the first objective of the strategy.

6. According to recent estimates, the world population of absolutely poor persons amounts to at least 1,118 million. Of those, more than 800 million, or 72 per cent of the world's absolute poor, reside in the ESCAP region. The region will continue to account for such high numbers and proportions of the world's absolute poor unless and until major new initiatives are undertaken to revise the

situation.

7. The widespread incidence of absolute poverty is a stark reality throughout much of the ESCAP region. The phenomenon of absolute poverty engulfs entire communities and social groups and may be transmitted from one generation to the next. It is responsible for hundreds of millions of lives lived in pain and hunger. It shortens life spans, diminishes the human spirit, erodes family and community bonds, and undermines the social and economic fabric of entire societies.

8. Absolute poverty contributes to social unrest and political instability. It thus reinforces authoritarian patterns of social organization, which are by their very nature resistant to the resolution of the prevailing poverty situation. In this way, the prevalence of absolute poverty in the region contributes to its own intractability and sustains its blighting influence over the long term. Only concerted action can break that vicious circle.

9. Consistent with the development priorities of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the social development strategy for the ESCAP region towards the year 2000 and beyond recognizes the need for sustained economic growth as an essential element contributing to the eradication of absolute poverty in the region. But economic growth by itself cannot ensure that poverty will be reduced, or that absolute poverty will be eradicated.

10. The need to deal with the issue of absolute poverty by other means than the "trickle down" effects of economic growth is vividly illustrated by the persistence of pockets of hunger in many developing countries of the ESCAP region. While food deficits have been successfully reduced, and even eliminated, throughout most of the region in recent years, access to food in most countries remains restricted to those with the necessary purchasing power. At the same time, increasing landlessness, despite sporadic efforts at land reform, has restricted access to food and thus intensified the incidence of absolute poverty.

11. The strategy therefore accords special consideration to social policy, planning and programming approaches aimed at intensifying the regional effort to eradicate the scourge of absolute poverty. It recognizes that the eradication of absolute poverty is a common responsibility of all countries of the region, a responsibility that must be fully discharged if the aims and objectives of the strategy are to be realized.

B. Realization of distributive justice

12. Enormous disparities in wealth, status and power stand as barriers and serve as causes of social conflict between ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, caste and other social groups throughout the ESCAP region. Vast inequities between rich and poor, the propertied and the destitute, the educated and the illiterate, urban and rural residents, the mainstream and the marginalized are a cruel reality of daily life. At the same time, the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups face institutionalized patterns of discrimination in their quest for equal status and opportunities as workers, consumers and citizens. The second objective of the strategy is therefore the realization of distributive justice.

13. In virtually all countries of the ESCAP region, the issue of human rights as a critical aspect of distributive justice requires urgent attention. Universal basic education, including literacy, is one essential means to that end, as it can provide the necessary awareness, understanding, communication skills and self-confidence through which all citizens may pursue their human rights. Improved access by all people, especially members of disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, to the formal justice system in their pursuit of remedies for grievances is a second essential means to that end. A third essential avenue is land reform, which can provide the region's landless poor with the means of achieving self-reliance as a first step to claiming their full rights in society.

14. Women's stereotyped reproductive and productive roles have perpetuated their subordinate status throughout the ESCAP region. While women play a significant, and in some senses predominant, role in economic and social development, their aspirations remain unmet. Gender equality in family, community and national life in the ESCAP region can be pursued effectively by ensuring that women receive equal treatment with men before the law, both de jure and de facto, that they receive equal compensation for equal work, that they receive equal access to education and training, and that their interests are considered explicitly in all development policies, plans and programmes.

15. The careful nurturing of children and youth to transform them into responsible and productive citizens will shape the future of the region. Yet, throughout much of the region, investment in child and youth health, nutrition and education continue to be neglected. Furthermore, large numbers of children

and youth live in especially difficult circumstances, characterized by neglect, exploitation and abandonment. Pursuit of the objective of distributive justice requires that these conditions be remedied urgently.

16. Disabled persons have traditionally been stigmatized in many societies in the region and have thus been subjected to systematic discrimination. Increased public awareness of the needs of disabled persons and of the productive role that they could play in development if given the opportunity would go far to reduce such discrimination. Access to essential services, particularly education and skills training, health care, and physical access to transport and other public facilities would provide disabled persons with the minimum conditions for self-reliance.

17. Elderly persons, traditionally occupying a favoured position in society throughout the region, have in recent decades been adversely affected by development trends. Among those trends are abandonment in the wake of family fragmentation, curtailed income and unwanted idleness through forced retirement, and reduced access to essential services owing to rising costs. The rapid ageing of societies in the region, coupled with the increasing hardships encountered by the elderly as adverse development trends proceed, require that new policies, plans and programmes be developed to meet the special needs of this disadvantaged social group.

C. Enhancement of popular participation

18. Popular participation refers to the full and active contribution of all the people to development. It refers to the people's opportunity, acting individually, as family and community members, and as citizens, to express their views, develop and utilize their skills, practise self-reliance, and exercise leadership in advancing their own development. In particular, it focuses on the people's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their future, including social development policy-making, planning and programming. The active and full participation of the people themselves in contributing to the management and execution of development is thus the third objective of this strategy.

19. A constructive partnership among all sections of society is required if the people themselves are to play an active role in all aspects of development. Governments, for their part, need to evolve means of responding in an egalitarian and constructive manner to the voices that represent all social groups. In accommodating to the fullest extent possible the expressed aspirations of all the

people as active participants in the determination of their individual and collective future, governments will fulfil their responsibilities to their national constituencies.

20. For the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, in particular, popular participation offers the possibility of achieving the rights that have traditionally been denied them as a result of both formal and informal patterns of discrimination. Non-governmental organizations, including community action groups, local voluntary associations, social service agencies, religious bodies and the like play an important role in this respect. As the representatives of those sections of society that ordinarily lack direct access to development policy makers and planners, non-governmental organizations can serve as an effective voice of the people.

21. The fullest possible participation of non-governmental organizations in the development policy-making, planning and programming process is thus required if popular participation is to succeed. While non-governmental organizations, in carrying out their work, will need to function within the overall national policy and planning framework devised at the highest level, their comparative advantage in designing and executing programmes and projects in accordance with needs and expectations at the grass-roots level should be recognized and respected. Partnership arrangements between governments and non-governmental organizations will promote the people's self-reliance while contributing to more efficient, intersectorally coordinated approaches to integrated social development policy-making, planning and programming.

22. All initiatives undertaken to enhance popular participation should be responsive to the people's felt needs and empower people to analyze and solve their own problems. They should reflect sensitivity to the diverse social conditions and cultural situations in the region and should offer solutions to local development problems that respect those differences. Prescriptions based on the expertise and judgement of outsiders can be helpful, but the ultimate proof of successful participatory development is action at the community level, based on popular awareness and local demand, in effective pursuit of the people's hopes and aspirations for an improved quality of life.

II. AREAS OF CONCERN

23. Current social conditions in the ESCAP region indicate that, despite their great diversity, the countries of Asia and the Pacific face a broad range of common concerns relating to the evolving social institutional infrastructure, the changing mix of critical social problems and the chronic insufficiency of social provision. Those common concerns are surveyed here with a view to identifying their main features.

24. While the various social concerns confronting the region are surveyed sequentially in this document, it is evident from the close interaction among those concerns that the aims and objectives of the strategy will require a comprehensive and coordinated multisectoral assault on the total syndrome of social concerns if it is to be successful.

A. Social organization

25. Throughout the ESCAP region, the family, the community, non-governmental organizations, business enterprises and the State form a network of social institutions supporting the individual's quest for a higher quality of life. If the aims and objectives of the strategy are to be achieved, it is essential that those major social institutions be made to function in a complementary and mutually supportive manner as partners in social development.

The individual

26. The hopes and aspirations of ordinary citizens throughout much of the ESCAP region for an improved quality of life remain unfulfilled in many respects. In many countries of the region, those unfulfilled expectations include such basic needs as food, shelter, health care and education. In addition, the fundamental desire of the people of the region to live their lives in dignity, peace and freedom in many cases remain unfulfilled.

27. All social institutions can be structured to play a role in ensuring that social development takes fully into account the value and dignity of the human person and ensures the promotion of human rights. As emphasized in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1969, that responsibility requires the immediate and final elimination of all forms of inequality and exploitation of individuals.

28. To achieve this, an equitable balance will need to be struck between the rights and responsibilities of the individual within the society. That will

involve the development of meaningful and effective means of participation to permit the individual's constructive interaction within the society. There is no reason why, through appropriate structural change, social institutions should not be made capable of empowering isolated and deprived individuals to assume a responsible and creative role in the development process. Careful reconsideration of individual rights and responsibilities within the rapidly changing social context accompanying development, and consequent redefinition of the full range of development policies, plans and programmes to provide full scope to the realization of those rights and responsibilities, need to be addressed throughout the region.

The family

29. It is commonly stated that the family is the basic social institution around which all societies organize themselves. However, development processes in the ESCAP region have had a corrosive impact on family structures and functions in recent decades. The neglect by social development policy makers and planners of the means whereby that deteriorating situation may be reversed reflects a serious misperception of the forces shaping development.

30. In the context of rapidly changing economic and social circumstances throughout the region, a number of important challenges currently confront the family, among which are: increased social and spatial mobility and, with it, the erosion of traditional family ties; an emerging preference for smaller, more flexible family forms; rising dependency ratios owing to the rapid ageing of populations; growing emphasis on individual rather than collective social values; and fundamental redefinitions of traditional family-member role expectations. With the rising incidence of divorce, separation, widowhood and unmarried parenthood, single-person households are also on the rise throughout the region.

31. In those circumstances, it is essential that consideration be given to policies and programmes whereby the social provisioning role of the family may be enhanced. It should be self-evident that the State cannot be expected to serve as a substitute for the family. Governments will therefore increasingly need to consider the means through which they can give effective support to the family in continuing to carry out its traditional functions in the face of the corrosive influence of development.

The community

32. The concept of community refers to the broad networks of informal social

relationships beyond the family but not reaching to the level of the State. It has been referred to as an extension of kinship, but implies much more. Critical aspects include residential contiguity, consensus assignment of leadership and authority, collaborative interdependence in production, reciprocal exchange relationships with respect to subsistence and marriage, a sense of social identity and independence from central authority, and a degree of economic and social self-reliance. All those characteristics of community can be turned with advantage to the cause of social development.

33. Like the family, and for many of the same reasons, the structure and functions of the community have been eroding in the process of development. It is evident that vigorous and sustained action is required to conserve, strengthen or replicate those forms and functions of the traditional community that remain relevant in the modern world. The community can, for instance, be mobilized to supplement the family in providing such essential social services as care of elderly, enabling support for the disabled persons, assistance to youth in responding to the requirements of adulthood, defense against crime, and relief in the wake of disasters. The community can also serve as an effective representative of the hopes and aspirations of its constituents and thus play an important role in the promotion of popular participation. Policies and programmes need to be devised to ensure that the potential contribution of the community to social development is realized.

Non-governmental organizations

34. Such diverse organizations as community action groups, local voluntary associations, social service agencies, religious bodies and other social groups that seek to serve the public interest without thought of personal gain are generally termed non-governmental organizations. The great diversity of such organizations ranges from grass-roots alliances providing a collective voice for the poor to national organizations charged with the delivery of essential services to disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups and international humanitarian agencies devoted to providing comfort and assistance to the most severely affected sections of society. Non-governmental organizations thus serve as a valuable supplement to the family and the community in meeting social needs.

35. In their special ability to reach directly to the grass-roots level, non-governmental organizations also serve as a useful complement to the State in ensuring the delivery of social services to those social groups in greatest need.

This has raised concern that some governments may find non-governmental organizations a convenient tool whereby to relinquish the State's responsibilities for providing essential services at the grass-roots level, and to the possibility that these organizations may thereby be co-opted to serve as a surrogate for the State.

36. At the same time, the tension between service delivery and advocacy of the interests of the downtrodden can bring non-governmental organizations into conflict with the State. To ensure that full scope is provided to those organizations in the fulfillment of their functions, it is therefore essential that their complementary potential relationship with the State in serving the interests of the people be taken into full account.

Business enterprises

37. The role of the private sector in serving social needs in the ESCAP region offers great scope for innovative extension. Private enterprise is a major -- and, in many countries of the ESCAP region, by far the most important -- provider of social services, though on a reimbursement basis. A critical justification for regulatory intervention by the State in the affairs of private enterprise throughout the region relates to the concern that reimbursement for services at the market rate precludes access to those services by large sections of society.

38. In its ability to function at a high level of efficiency and responsiveness to demand, private enterprise can serve as a valuable complement to the State and non-governmental organizations in the delivery of essential social services. The privatization of State-held productive undertakings to private management and control can be extended to the provision of an expanded range of social services by business enterprises. In particular, the delivery of health-care services, education services, housing facilities, social insurance schemes and the like could be enhanced through the active participation of the private sector, with special provisions included to ensure that such services are delivered to disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups at affordable prices.

39. Other social responsibilities also lie within the purview of business enterprises. In their capacity as employer of much of the region's labour force, firms can ensure that wage rates, working conditions, skills training opportunities and other aspects of employment are adequate and equitable. In their capacity as producers, they can ensure that consumers are dealt with

fairly. The adverse environmental impact of the region's rapid economic growth also requires that a conscientious effort be made by the private sector to adapt its production and distribution practices appropriately.

The State

40. Governments throughout the ESCAP region, reflecting the hopes and aspirations of their constituencies, have been strongly affected by the universal ideals of social progress in recent decades. Those ideals have, in turn, been considered attainable only on the basis of national unity, political and military security, economic growth and self-reliance, and human resources development. In seeking to ensure that those necessary conditions are fully met, many governments in the region have delayed making a frontal assault on the critical social issues of poverty eradication, distributive justice and popular participation. The time is ripe for the launching of that long-delayed frontal assault.

41. The social development responsibilities of the State range from ensuring that social concerns are fully covered in policy, planning and programming at the central level down to the delivery of such essential social services as health care and education at the local level. All governments in the region have established an extensive administrative apparatus for the implementation of those functions; in fact, the largest share of civil servants in most countries in the region are attached to the education, health and other social service ministries.

42. The vast scope and complexity of the social development challenge require the full and active participation of all sectors of society. While the State, as the ultimate representative of the people, must serve as primus inter pares and while all other participating social entities must respect that position, it cannot meet the challenge unaided. Thus, the State, in close consultation with the people themselves, must devise means of addressing the challenge through a "partnership for social development" involving all major social sectors in a frontal assault on the region's critical social issues.

B. Social issues

43. The broad range of social issues confronting the ESCAP region form a syndrome of interrelated conditions preventing the masses of the people, particularly the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society, from realizing their hopes and aspirations for substantial and sustained improvement in their quality of life. The major issues are surveyed below.

Population

44. Despite a decline in the annual population growth rate from 2.3 per cent in the period 1970-1975 to 1.8 per cent in the period 1985-1990, the population of the ESCAP region continues to expand by some 55 million persons per year. The population of the region as of 1990 represented an increase of about 20 per cent over the 1980 level. It is expected to increase by a further 28 per cent between 1990 and 2005, to reach a total of approximately 4,000 million persons. Fertility rates will not decline to replacement level for most countries of the ESCAP region before 2010. During the 1990s and into the next century, the vast majority of births in the region will continue to occur in those countries that are characterized by widespread absolute poverty, inadequate social infrastructure and comparatively low rates of economic growth.

45. The region's population size and rate of growth, its changing age composition, and its shifting rural-urban distribution act as an important influence on many of the region's current social development issues. Mass poverty, widespread unemployment and underemployment, rural landlessness, urban squalor, natural resource depletion, environmental degradation, international indebtedness and political tensions, both domestically and between States, feature prominently among the social development concerns that are linked intimately with the region's demographic conditions.

Health

46. Impressive advances have been recorded in the health situation throughout the region in recent decades. From the distressingly low levels of only a few decades ago, life expectancy for the region as a whole currently averages about 64 years. Widely cited as responsible for the generally improved situation are rising nutrition standards, higher literacy and health education levels, wider public access to health information, increased availability of affordable antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals, improvements in fertility control, wider access to safe water and improved sanitation, among other primary health care-related developments.

47. The successes of recent decades, however impressive and welcome they may be, have not resolved the full range of health problems, especially among the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups. Of particular concern is the persistence of hunger and malnutrition, as well as debilitating and life-threatening diseases, among the region's absolute poor. Of special concern, too,

is the inequitable distribution of recent gains among all social groups, with the rural and urban poor, as well as the other disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society, recording relatively meagre gains, if any, in life expectancy and morbidity. In many developing countries of the ESCAP region, over half the people continue to lack access to essential health care services, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

48. Major new health-related issues are the recent rapid spread of drug abuse and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in many countries of the region. If alcohol, psychoactive pharmaceuticals and volatile substances are taken into account, it is apparent that there is a rising trend in the use of all kinds of consciousness-altering substances in the region. That trend is particularly serious because of its adverse impact on social organization, particularly the family and the community, and its stimulus to crime and delinquency. In addition, intravenous drug abuse, which is spreading rapidly in the region, is a direct cause of AIDS. Furthermore, social disintegration and economic deprivation constitute an important cause of drug abuse, linking this emerging health problem to the urgent need to raise the quality of life of the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups.

49. The major source of AIDS transmission in Asia and the Pacific is now heterosexual behavior, often involving poor, very young and grossly exploited prostitutes. It is likely that there will be many million HIV infected people in the region by the year 2000 - the resources of health systems will not be adequate even to assist them to a relatively dignified death. It is, therefore, imperative that a major effort be made to develop effective prevention strategies. Prevention of AIDS requires behavioral changes, which will have to be achieved by those who have the preponderance of power in heterosexual relationships, men. AIDS must be viewed as a societal issue rather than a health problem. Current sexual behavior, not least that imposed by sex tourism, must at the very least change to accommodate safe sex practices which express concern for the health of women and their children, born and unborn.

Education.

50. The ESCAP region has made considerable progress for several decades in extending basic education and literacy to all sections of society. Nevertheless, progress has been slower than anticipated in many countries. Shortages of qualified teachers, classroom space and educational materials have hampered

efforts to meet the target of universal primary education in the region. In many cases, disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, especially in rural and isolated areas, continue to lack access to formal education. Of particular concern is the continuing gender disparity in literacy and access to basic education.

51. The region's age-appropriate population enrolled in secondary schools has doubled from about one quarter to one half over the past quarter century. In addition to the need to further extend access to secondary education, the quality of that education remains a matter of concern. Paralleling the situation at the primary level, disparities between male and female secondary enrolment rates persist in many countries of the ESCAP region. At the same time, the number of persons with access to technical and vocational training, while increasing, has remained small.

Employment

52. The structural transformation under way throughout the ESCAP region, from traditional to modern patterns of economic organization, from labour-intensive to capital-intensive modes of production, and from agricultural to industrial sector dominance, is having a profound impact on employment and working conditions; no longer is the labour market capable of absorbing all new workforce entrants; no longer is it willing to accept all job seekers regardless of their limited skills.

53. Throughout much of the region, the rural economy has traditionally served as employer of last resort for the majority of the working population. With the persistent decline in the labour-absorptive capacity of agriculture along with the continuous growth of the labour force, this situation has come under increasing pressure. Chronic unemployment and underemployment of the unskilled and semi-skilled workforce has thus become a matter of growing concern, particularly with respect to the implications that such a situation carries for the quality of life of the affected workers and their dependants as well as for social stability in general.

54. The marginalization of unskilled workers in the wake of technological change and industrialization has created a sprawling informal sector characterized by minimal incomes in return for a life of drudgery with no hope of advancement. With limited access to education and skills training, and with equally limited information about job opportunities in the more dynamic, modern

sector, this large segment of the labour force is being increasingly isolated, reinforcing the vicious circle of absolute poverty and accentuating the region's striking socio-economic disparities.

Shelter

55. The majority of the world's nearly 1.2 billion homeless or inadequately sheltered people reside in the ESCAP region. In the rural areas, some 60 per cent of households lack access to safe drinking water and about 80 per cent lack adequate sanitation facilities. In the urban areas, 30-40 per cent of the people live in slum and squatter settlements. If current trends continue, more than 50 per cent of the residents in some of the region's large urban areas will, by 2020, live in substandard housing characterized by non-permanent dwellings, severely inadequate infrastructure and lack of essential services.

56. Shanty towns and squatter settlements generate slum conditions along the urban periphery in most countries of the region. Severe social and economic problems face the residents of these and neighbouring communities, ranging from restricted access to health and education services to limited employment opportunities and insecurity of person and property. Generally, the cost of extending physical infrastructure and social services to these haphazardly burgeoning communities is beyond the financial capacity of municipalities, adding to the atmosphere of wretchedness and neglect.

Environment

57. Economic and social development throughout the ESCAP region has proceeded in recent decades with little concern for the environmental consequences. All sections of society have, in fact, actively exploited the environment for short-term gains without regard for the long-term consequences. The most flagrant despoiler of the environment is the enterprise sector, which has depleted the region's "natural capital" for transformation into "man-made capital"; promoted the commercialization of agriculture at the expense of the land; and zealously expanded industrial production and introduced new technologies irrespective of the environmental pollution generated.

58. At the same time, major social conditions, such as population growth and absolute poverty, abetted by the spread of individualism, materialism and consumerism as basic social values, have had an adverse impact on the region's physical environment. The combination of widespread ignorance and carelessness of the consequences of environmentally harmful practices is undermining the

people's long-term social well-being. In the absence of urgent and concerted action, the quality of life of all sections of society throughout the region will be affected permanently.

Disasters

59. The ESCAP region suffers more frequent and severe natural disasters than any other region. Devastating typhoons, floods, droughts, tidal waves, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and other calamities occur frequently in the region, with a severe impact on the immediate conditions of social welfare and on longer-term social and economic development. More often, however, the disasters that plague the region are smaller, less "newsworthy" events, which nevertheless take thousands of lives annually, cause untold suffering to those who survive, and exhaust the limited development resources of many countries. Little has been done in the region to prepare for such disasters and reduce their impact on all sections of society.

60. In addition to natural disasters, man-made disasters resulting from such situations as dangerous industrial working conditions, poor transport safety standards, inadequate construction methods, environmental pollution, and the use and trafficking of toxic chemicals and dumping of hazardous wastes are increasing throughout the region. In terms of the enormous annual cost to the region in terms of lives lost, people left disabled and dislocated, and property destroyed, man-made disasters in the region rival the damage inflicted by natural disasters. Laws and regulations aimed at reducing such dangerous situations, and the enforcement of such laws and regulations, are inadequate, as are the means of coping with such disasters when they occur.

Crime

61. Crimes against both person and property have increased dramatically in the ESCAP region in recent decades. Although youth crime and delinquency continue to constitute only a fraction of total criminality in the region, their rapid growth is a matter of special concern. Rising trends have been noted not only in conventional offenses by youth but in the violence-related gravity of youth crime.

62. The roots of the crime problem as a social development issue in the ESCAP region are found in the grinding pressure of dire poverty in the shadow of relative affluence: the weakening of family and community ties as individualist, materialist and consumerist values penetrate traditional societies; the social

dislocation and alienation associated with the increasing urbanization of society; the lack of job opportunities commensurate with the training and expectations of many new labour force entrants; and the persistence of rigid patterns of discrimination among social groups in many countries.

Social security

63. The substantive and spiritual security provided by the family, the community and other social institutions at each stage of the life cycle is essential to every individual. However, the erosion of family and community, the social dislocation and alienation inherent in urban life, the value transformations attendant upon technological change, the uncertainties imposed by the organized labour market, and other aspects of social development in the ESCAP region are introducing new elements of insecurity into the lives of the people.

64. Paradoxically, the struggle to escape absolute poverty and to achieve distributive justice and popular participation requires the sacrifice of a degree of social security. Improvement in the status of women, for instance, inevitably leads women away from the solidarity of the authoritarian family. Migration from the farm to the city or from the village to foreign countries, while opening new vistas to the migrant, inevitably creates for the dependants left behind new uncertainties previously undreamed of. At the same time, the widening of opportunities with entry into the organized labour market brings with it commensurate risks of unemployment and skills obsolescence in a dynamic commercial setting. Social security, thus, is a continuing concern throughout the ESCAP region, and an increasing one as social development proceeds to erode traditional social "safety nets".

C. Social provision

65. "Adequacy of social provision" refers to the extent to which a society is successful in mobilizing and utilizing the resources required to meet its social needs. Fundamental among those needs are the assurance of an adequate level of subsistence, an equitable distribution of resources and the active participation of all sections of society in the development process. In satisfying those needs, a society will have met the objectives of the strategy.

The institutional framework

66. As reviewed in the preceding section on "social organization", social

needs in the ESCAP region continue to be met through an extraordinarily varied mix of interventions -- modern and traditional, formal and informal, intermittent and continuing, large- and small-scale, public and private. In addition to the conventional means of providing for health, education, shelter and similar universal social needs, a diversity of "emergency" services is provided by a broad range of support measures for individuals, families and communities in distress owing to unemployment, sickness, injury, neglect or abandonment, natural disasters and the like.

67. The pressure upon the State to assume prime responsibility for the provision of both the standard and emergency ranges of social services has in recent decades risen steadily as a result of the deterioration of the traditional social-welfare "safety net" provided by the family and the community. Other social institutions, particularly non-governmental organizations, have been called on increasingly to supplement the role of the State in that regard, while the private sector continues to play a less active role. Under those circumstances, the State has in recent decades come to dominate social provisioning throughout much of the ESCAP region, with the participation of non-governmental organizations also increasing.

68. Government intervention has consisted primarily of formal programmes in the areas of education, health care, income security and other conventional means of social provisioning, while non-governmental organizations have emphasized the delivery of "hands on" social services at the grass-roots level. Inevitably, the range and diversity of social services that both the public and non-governmental sectors are being called on to provide is expanding. However, both government agencies and non-governmental organizations are often inappropriately or inadequately equipped — in terms of mandate, organization, personnel, facilities and financial resources — to fulfil the people's expectations.

69. In view of the prevailing inadequacies of social provisioning in the face of massive needs, governments throughout the region are coming to recognize the importance of providing support to the traditional institutions of the family and the community as social service delivery mechanisms. The value of promoting the active cooperation of non-governmental organizations as well as business enterprises in that cause is also being increasingly recognized. It is evident, furthermore, that the required multisectoral effort should be financed by a broad range of "social insurance" schemes funded not only by tax levies but also by

employee and employer contributions, service and other user fees, charitable donations, mutual aid, self-help and other sources.

The syndrome of social issues

70. The preceding section on "social issues" emphasized that the plethora of concerns facing the region does not consist of a bundle of independent problems. Inadequate education, poor health, unemployment, crime, social conflict, and the various other major social issues seen to be troubling the region are the visible manifestations of a system of mutually reinforcing conditions, a complex network of causal interaction. The various social issues troubling the region are bound together in chains of cumulative causation, low-level equilibrium traps and vicious circles which require systemic rather than piecemeal analysis.

71. The resolution of that syndrome of self-sustaining social development problems requires comprehensive resolution. Instead of the conventional sequence of sporadic efforts at reorganization or the fine-tuning of existing approaches, it requires a well coordinated, multisectoral initiative aimed at dealing with the roots of the situation directly.

72. Past responses to the region's social issues on a piecemeal basis have tended to provide partial or temporary remedies at best, as the submersion of the individual issues within the larger network of mutually reinforcing conditions carries the seeds of relapse to the status quo ante. It is largely for this reason that, all too often, efforts at resolving specific regional social issues have had unexpectedly little lasting success in the past.

73. Expressed in more rigorous terms, the continuing expenditure of financial, physical and human resources to deal with the region's pressing social issues on a "micro" or "partial equilibrium" basis represent a form of social consumption, as that expenditure tends to bring only temporary relief. If efforts directed at resolving those issues are to be dealt with as social investment seeking acceptable rates of return, the required expenditure will need to conform to "macro" or "general equilibrium" policies, plans and programmes aimed at cutting across the entire syndrome of issues. Only such a response of simultaneous, closely coordinated intervention on many fronts will generate the critical minimum effort needed to overcome the low-level equilibrium traps and vicious circles in which the region's social development process is caught.

Planning for social development

74. The region has been witness to innumerable sporadic efforts to address the challenge of social development. Most of those efforts have been reactive rather than proactive. The reactive approach seeks to remedy social problems as they appear. It has been termed the "band-aid" approach to social development. By contrast, the proactive approach bases interventionist measures on diagnostic analysis of the underlying dynamics of the development process. It seeks to prevent the emergence of social problems by guiding the course of social development directly towards the realization of explicitly defined social objectives.

75. Some countries of the ESCAP region have in recent years moved towards a proactive approach by devising social development programmes within the framework of overall development planning. That exercise focuses attention on the specification of national social development objectives and on the means of attaining those objectives. In some cases, that planning effort has included broad coverage of the programmes under the aegis of various ministries.

76. Rarely, however, has planning for social development in the ESCAP region considered the need to account for the interaction among social development issues and the need, therefore, for the comprehensive, integrated approach to dealing with those issues. Nor have development planners in the region yet systematically included in their planning exercises consideration of the complementary roles of other sectors, particularly non-governmental organizations and business enterprises, as partners with governments in meeting the challenge social development. The opportunity implicit in that integrated approach to social development policy, planning and programming lie at the heart of the regional social development strategy.

III. NATIONAL POLICY, PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

77. Action to achieve the aims and objectives set out in this strategy requires a comprehensive and sustained region-wide initiative. That initiative can only succeed, at the national level, on the basis of a firm commitment by all governments, in close cooperation with their partners in development, to undertake a vigorous multisectoral programme to accelerate the course of social development along lines beneficial to all the people, giving particular attention to the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society.

78. In taking up the challenge, governments, in close association with all other actors on the national scene, will need to devise specific policies, plans and programmes comprising an integrated, forward-looking approach to social development - an approach that responds directly to the root causes of the regional syndrome of social issues. Central to that effort should be the formulation and implementation, in each country of the ESCAP region, of a national programme of action for social development.

79. The following major functions should be emphasized in each national action programme as a means of ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach to the implementation of the strategy: intra-governmental and intersectoral coordination of the social development policy, planning and programming process; targeting of the specific social issues and disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups to be given priority attention; training of personnel for the delivery of social services; information and research on the social issues and on the responses required; monitoring and evaluation of programme impact; and resource allocation to permit effective programme implementation. Each of those aspects of an integrated approach is elaborated upon below.

A. Intra-governmental coordination

80. Successful implementation of the strategy requires a systematic effort to ensure that all concerned ministries and other government agencies synchronize their social development policy-making, planning and programming activities to maximize complementarities and avoid duplication and overlap. Only through such careful intragovernmental coordination can a comprehensive and integrated governmental response be devised for addressing the social development challenge.

81. To facilitate such action, each government should designate a national coordinating body to provide leadership in the implementation of the strategy. That body should be constituted at a high level of government to ensure that the aims and objectives of the strategy are pursued in a vigorous and systematic manner, and that all concerned ministries and other agencies are fully involved in that effort.

82. That coordinating role could typically devolve upon an inter-ministerial committee reporting directly to the Prime Minister, with the national development planning agency serving as its secretariat. Its membership would consist of the ministers or other presiding officials of all ministries and other government agencies responsible for dealing with the various social concerns covered by the

strategy. Governments having different administrative structures could establish alternative arrangements at an equally senior level.

83. The national coordinating body would be entrusted with overall responsibility for directing the formulation of a national programme of action in implementation of the strategy. It would, furthermore, be responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved through that programme of action towards the realization of the aims and objectives of the strategy. In that capacity, it would seek to ensure that all concerned ministries and other government agencies play a constructive and complementary role in keeping with their assigned responsibilities under the national programme of action.

84. The essential elements of such a mechanism are already in place in many countries of the ESCAP region. Where that is the case, steps should be taken to strengthen and consolidate the authority of that national coordinating body to ensure an effective management base for integrated social development policy-making, planning and programming. Where interministerial committees have already been established to oversee social development, and where development planning agencies already contain units responsible for "the social sector", their functions should be broadened, as and where necessary, to embrace the full syndrome of social concerns covered by the strategy and to respond to those concerns within the overall scope of the development planning process.

B. Intersectoral coordination

85. An effective national initiative to meet the aims and objectives of the strategy will require active and ongoing participation by all social sectors in the formulation and implementation of the national programme of action. Each government in the region should therefore call on all sectors, including in particular business enterprises and non-governmental organizations, to collaborate in the formulation of the national action programme and contribute to its implementation.

86. Each participating sector should establish its own inter-organizational mechanism (for example, a national chamber of commerce in the business sector, a national council of voluntary agencies in the non-governmental sector) to represent its views and provide its expertise in the formulation and implementation of the national programme of action. The precise partnership role to be played by each sector under the national action programme would be

identified through close consultation between the various sectoral inter-organizational mechanisms and the national coordinating body.

87. Maximization of the comparative advantage of each sector as a contributor to the realization of the aims and objectives of the strategy should be the main emphasis in the determination of sectoral inputs into the national programme of action. The inter-organizational mechanism established in each concerned sector could, with that purpose in mind, propose its own sectoral programme in support of the national action programme. Those sectoral programmes could, in turn, consist of specific projects proposed by individual participating organizations.

88. Governments should take all appropriate steps to promote such intersectoral partnership arrangements in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the strategy. In particular, the private sector should be encouraged to complement government programmes in extending low-cost health care, basic education, housing and other essential services to disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups. At the same time, non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to strengthen their delivery of social services to disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, generate broad-based community participation in development, and explore innovative and potentially cost-effective approaches to the enhancement of self-reliance at the grass-roots level.

C. Targeting

89. National programmes of action in implementation of the strategy should be carefully focused to produce specific, clearly identifiable outputs within clearly demarcated time periods. Such targeting of intended outputs will encourage realistic assessment of the resource constraints and feasibility limits, innovative techniques for generating the intended outputs and effective monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved.

90. The timing for the achievement of specific social development programme targets should be calibrated to coincide with existing overall national development targets. This would require the national programmes of action to be phased in conformity with the overall development planning cycle. With that intent, programme formulation, including target-setting, should be initiated immediately, with a view to completing the preparatory work and initiating full-scale implementation by the beginning of 1994, or as soon thereafter as the national development planning cycle would permit.

91. The year 2000 should be designated as a benchmark year for the attainment of specific results towards the fulfilment of the strategy objectives of poverty eradication, distributive justice and popular participation. Towards that end, each country should initiate at the earliest possible time an exercise to identify the social development targets that it intends to meet by the year 2000. Those targets should be clearly identified in terms of specific, measurable quality-of-life indicators.

92. Targets should be set not only at the "macro" or national level with respect to the resolution of major social development issues but also "sectorally" with respect to the various disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups requiring focused attention. Such target-setting would, in turn, necessitate preliminary surveys of the social situation for each social group, the disaggregation of the national programmes of action by social group, and the ongoing monitoring and assessment of activities on behalf of each group.

93. All partners in development at the national level, including business firms, non-governmental organizations, community groups and, through the political process, all citizens, should be consulted in the setting of social development targets. The views of all sections of society should be taken fully into account to ensure that the national action programmes are responsive to the expressed hopes and aspirations of the people.

94. The responsibilities of all participating sectors in meeting the set targets should be specified. To that end, each sectoral action programme should contain its own targets, calibrated in accord with the "macro" and "sectoral" targets specified in the national programmes of action, to ensure intersectoral consistency and coordination in the implementation of the national programmes of action.

95. Governments should enter into consultations with all concerned United Nations and other international bodies and agencies, as well as donor countries, to seek their support for the targets set in the national programmes of action and ensure their effective collaboration in meeting those targets by phasing their technical and financial assistance programmes accordingly.

D. Training

96. The professional capabilities of the personnel responsible for the implementation of the national programmes of action will need to be strengthened if the aims and objectives of the strategy are to be attained. While the

commitment and motivation of personnel engaged in the planning and delivery of social services in the ESCAP region, whether in the public or other sectors, are generally praiseworthy, their technical qualifications in many cases fall short of requirements. This imposes a constraint which training programmes at all levels of responsibility and in all relevant sectors of activity can do much to reduce.

97. To deal with that issue at the policy-making and planning levels, national civil service and public administration training institutes should strengthen their staff and curricula in the field of social development. They should organize special seminars and workshops for senior development planners and policy makers so that they may rethink entrenched views and practices concerning the role of social development within the context of overall development and consider afresh the means whereby the aims and objectives of the strategy might best be pursued. Those exercises could link up with activities under way in national development research institutes to apprise policy makers and planners of the latest thinking on social development issues and on alternative approaches to their resolution.

98. To strengthen national capabilities with respect to both the planning and delivery of social services, academic programmes should be established and strengthened in leading tertiary education institutions throughout the region to expose larger numbers of students to the essential concepts, theories and practices of social service delivery, introduce them to the career opportunities available in the field of social work, and provide them with basic training in the techniques of social service delivery to disadvantaged groups at the grass-roots level.

99. With respect to the social service delivery personnel already on the job, special orientation programmes should be organized to familiarize them with the regional social development strategy and the national programmes of action being undertaken in pursuit of the strategy. In addition, a sequence of on-the-job training courses with a standardized curriculum should be developed to upgrade the professional skills of social work personnel in all relevant government agencies. Those programmes should provide practical training to strengthen technical skills as a prerequisite for career development in line with the aims and objectives of the strategy.

100. Governments should also help to strengthen the technical competence of

the staff of non-governmental organizations and of community-level volunteers as social workers. Such personnel could be invited to participate in the on-the-job training courses designed to upgrade the professional skills of social work personnel in the public sector. They could also be provided with self-teaching manuals and other training materials as well as the outreach services of qualified training personnel to promote the professionalization of their work as a complement to the work under way in government agencies.

E. Information and research

101. Accurate, comprehensive and timely information concerning social conditions and trends as well as the social impact of development policies, plans and programmes is essential if national programmes of action in implementation of the strategy are to be properly designed. Furthermore, if programmes are to be properly targeted, the national database on social conditions and trends should be disaggregated by social group, economic class and geographical area. A systematic effort is called for in all countries of the ESCAP region to establish and strengthen such a database.

102. The establishment of social development information systems should be guided by the aims and objectives of the strategy. With those guidelines in mind, each country will need to devise a set of indicators of the quality of life and identify the specific quantitative and qualitative variables to be used in measuring national performance in that regard. The indicators should be so constructed as to permit their disaggregation with special reference to the quality of life of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society. National surveys of the quality of life should then be carried out periodically. The first survey round should be undertaken immediately to provide a benchmark against which future progress may be ganged.

103. The formulation of national action programmes will require diagnostic research and policy analysis. The results of the initial national survey of the quality of life will provide a critical input into that research effort. As a practical means of ensuring the necessary research effort, national development research institutes should be requested to give priority attention in their research programmes to the analysis of social development concerns and the corresponding policy and planning options.

104. In designing the necessary social development information systems and

research programmes, due consideration should be given to the following points:

(1) Social development information systems, diagnostic research and policy analysis should be promoted with the specific view of advancing the aims and objectives of the regional social development strategy;

(2) To the fullest extent possible, representatives of all target groups should be involved in the design of national social development information systems and research agendas;

(3) Social development information collection and social action research undertaken by non-governmental and private sector research organizations should be encouraged and, where appropriate, undertaken with government collaboration;

(4) High on the research agendas of national development research institutions should be a continuing examination of the interface between macro-economic and social development processes and policies;

(5) A standard procedure for the planning and coordination of social development information collection and research should be established to ensure the efficient coordination of information and research activities;

(6) Governments should ensure that information on social conditions and the findings of social development research are disseminated widely and on a timely basis.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

105. National social development information systems, and in particular the findings of quality of life surveys, should form the basis for the continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of the success of national action programmes designed to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.

106. In the monitoring and evaluation of the pace and pattern of social development, consideration should be given in particular to the impact of the national programmes of action on social organization (specifically, the changing structure and functions of the family, the community, non-governmental organizations, business enterprises and the State), major social issues (specifically, with respect to population, health, education, employment, shelter, environment, disasters, crime and social security) and the adequacy of

social provision. Such impact analysis will provide a basis for broader assessment of the success of the strategy in achieving the eradication of absolute poverty, realization of distributive justice and enhancement of popular participation.

107. The findings of social development monitoring and evaluation exercises should be reviewed by the national coordinating bodies for action in making appropriate modifications to the national programmes of action, to ensure that efforts to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy are sustained with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

G. Resource allocation

108. Investment in social development needs to be increased substantially and its effectiveness and efficiency improved throughout the ESCAP region if the aims and objectives of the strategy are to be achieved in the foreseeable future. To that end, it will be necessary for each country to estimate the financial, human and other resource inputs required for the effective implementation of its national programme of action and to decide on the appropriate means of mobilizing the necessary resources

109. Each country of the ESCAP region must turn, first and foremost, to its own resources for financing its national programme of action. Vigorous measures will be required if the necessary domestic resources to implement the programme of action are to be generated. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has estimated that Governments should allocate 25-30 per cent of their total financial resources to social expenditure if a proper balance is to be maintained between economic and social progress.

110. Resource mobilization for social development should not be considered solely a state responsibility. On the domestic front, individuals, families, communities, non-governmental organizations and business firms can play a vital role in the mobilization of financial, human and other resources for social development. Partnership arrangements between the State and all those components of the social system should be promoted to complement and supplement the public resources allocated for social development purposes.

111. In addition to its purely financial role, resource allocation can serve as a powerful policy instrument in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the strategy. Just as progressive expenditure patterns serve to focus social investment on the sections of society in greatest need, so can progressive

revenue generation patterns extract the necessary resources from the sections of society most able to bear the burden. Governments should therefore seek to maximize the progressivity of their resource allocation structures, commensurate with other considerations.

112. In view of the prevailing resource constraints, Governments may find it necessary to reallocate their expenditure among social sectors and social concerns to the highest priority areas consistent with the aims and objectives of the strategy. Social development policy makers should take care, in such circumstances, to avoid slipping into "crisis management" or "band-aid" responses to the urgent issues of the day. Rather, emphasis should consistently be placed on the need to pursue social development as a comprehensive process requiring a measured and sustained planning approach.

IV. REGIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES

113. The efforts of countries of the ESCAP region to pursue the aims and objectives of the strategy with the formulation and implementation of national programmes of action can be greatly strengthened through regional cooperation. Such cooperative action can be pursued through direct bilateral relations between governments in the region as well as through support provided by subregional, regional and concerned international entities, including United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental bodies, development finance institutions and non-governmental organizations.

114. In activating regional cooperation in pursuit of the strategy, all governments in the region, consistent with their national needs, priorities and capabilities, should create or strengthen, and fully utilize, as appropriate, the means of:

(1) Exchanging information on national programmes of action in implementation of the strategy; conducting seminars and workshops on social issues and policy, planning and programming options; preparing and disseminating technical studies, comparative analyses and guidelines on leading social issues and trends; and networking among concerned social development training and research institutions;

(2) Sharing available expertise through technical assistance and technical exchange programmes to facilitate the analysis of

leading social issues and trends, selection of policies, formulation of plans and design of national action programmes;

(3) Strengthening national capabilities for social development by conducting joint in-service and mid-career training activities, study tours and orientation programmes for social development policy makers, planners and programmers as well as social service delivery personnel.

115. All donor Governments, particularly those which are ESCAP members, should accord high priority, in their current and projected technical and financial assistance programmes, to increasing their support to the developing countries of the region in their efforts to formulate and implement national action plans in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the strategy. Priority consideration, in that regard, should be given to the least developed, land-locked and small developing island countries in the region, and to the region's heavily indebted countries.

116. All subregional organizations in the ESCAP region are invited to provide technical support to the formulation and implementation of national programmes of action for social development and to participate actively in all other respects, as appropriate, in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the strategy.

117. All concerned United Nations bodies and agencies are urged to direct special attention to supporting the efforts of the countries of the ESCAP region to accelerate their social development in keeping with the aims and objectives of the strategy through:

(1) The dissemination of relevant scientific and technical information, the organization and conduct of seminars and workshops on leading social issues and trends, and the provision of advisory services on integrated approaches to social development policy, planning and programming;

(2) The provision of technical assistance to strengthen national information and research capabilities on quality-of-life indicators, social policy analysis and integrated social policy, planning and programming techniques;

(3) The preparation of technical guidelines and the formulation of standards appropriate to the ESCAP region for the formulation

and implementation of national programmes of action in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the strategy;

(4) Comparative analysis of social development training needs and priorities, and the design and testing of orientation and training materials to promote increased awareness of social development concerns and enhance national self-reliance in the delivery of social services.

118. International development finance institutions are called upon to increase their support to the developing countries of the ESCAP region, and particularly to the region's least developed, land-locked and island developing countries and the heavily indebted countries, in their efforts to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. In that connection, those institutions, in close collaboration with other aid donors, might wish to consider the possibility of establishing a consortium to coordinate their activities in support of national programmes of action for social development in the region.

119. In view of their considerable experience with the delivery of social services to disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups, community approaches to development, and advocacy of popular participation in development in the ESCAP region, international non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in support of the strategy. Through their national affiliates, they can provide valuable technical contributions to the formulation of national programmes of action and, through partnership arrangements, provide resource inputs to programme implementation.

120. ESCAP has a mandate to serve as the regional focal point for the implementation of the strategy and to provide a multisectoral range of technical assistance to its members and associate members in support of the strategy. In that capacity, ESCAP should support national efforts to devise national programmes of action in implementation of the strategy, and should coordinate all regional support measures by:

(1) Strengthening and expanding its comprehensive, intersectoral programme of activities in social development and related fields to provide substantive support to the implementation of the strategy throughout the region;

(2) Providing advisory and other technical services to interested countries of the ESCAP region in devising appropriate

policies, plans and programmes and in adapting their organizational arrangements for the effective implementation of the strategy;

(3) Assisting governments, within the terms of its mandate and in close cooperation with established multilateral donor institutions, in establishing regional mechanisms for resource mobilization in support of the strategy;

(4) Establishing an inter-agency task force to promote vigorous intersectoral participation and ensure effective coordination of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in the implementation of the strategy;

(5) Establishing a forum of non-governmental organizations concerned with social development issues in the region to promote their active and constructive participation and ensure their effective coordination in implementation of the strategy;

(6) Devising procedures for, and carrying out the regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the strategy at national and regional levels.

121. ESCAP should, in 1994, upon the conclusion of the preparatory phase of activities in implementation of the strategy, convene a regional conference of senior government officials, concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and representatives of all other concerned partners in development in order to review and assess the progress achieved towards attaining the aims and objectives of the strategy, consider the means of enhancing regional cooperation in support of the strategy and revise it as may be called for in the light of experience and changing regional social conditions.